

Obituary

Horsley Gantt

Professor W. Horsley Gantt, who died on 26 February 1980 at Baltimore at the age of 86, achieved distinction by his mastery of the physiological methods of Ivan Pavlov, of whom he was the biographer.

Born in Virginia, Gantt became an MD of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore. In 1922 he came to England on his way to Russia under the American Relief Administration, whose task was to report on the degree of disease and undernourishment that followed the war and the revolution; and on his return from Russia he spent a year in London working in the laboratory of Professor MacNee at University College Hospital; then, having been greatly impressed by Pavlov's genius for experimentation, he decided to return to Russia to work with him. He remained in Leningrad for four years (1925–29). This was the period in which he made the acquaintance of John dos Passos, the writer, who became a lifelong friend and with whom he journeyed widely on foot in Southern Russia. At the same time he perfected his knowledge of the Russian language. Gantt's contacts with Russian scientists did much to dispel suspicions and misunderstandings that arose in the McCarthy era.

In 1929, on his return to Baltimore, he initiated the Pavlovian Laboratory at the Johns Hopkins Hospital at the instance of Adolf Meyer. Among his many contributions to medical research were studies on the treatment of diseases of

the liver and digestive disorders; secretions of the digestive glands; conditional reflexes and behaviour; anatomy of conditional reflex pathways; experimental neurosis; constitutional factors in disease; application of physiological methods to the dynamics of human psychopathology; and most important of all, preventive psychiatry. Gantt also challenged the teaching of Freud on the grounds that it was not based on any scientific findings but was more in the nature of a cult. He received many awards, including two from the American Heart Association (1951 and 1954), as well as the coveted Lasker Award. This recognition was for his work on the effect of environmental stimuli on cardiac rhythm.

Gantt retained his physical and intellectual vigour till the last year of his life, attending and contributing to many congresses, where the audience could generally expect an original point of view to illuminate the problem being discussed. It was partly owing to his enthusiasm and friendliness that many British psychiatrists looked on Baltimore over the years almost as a second home. His frequent visits to England were always special occasions, and these contacts with his stimulating personality will be greatly missed.

A. SPENCER PATERSON

Reports and Pamphlets

Seminar on Day Care for the Mentally Ill

DHSS seminar at National Institute. November 1978.

Day care, whether in a psychiatric day hospital or a local authority day centre, is potentially the most intensive form of care available for mentally ill patients who are treated while still living in the community. While day hospitals have existed for more than three decades, social service day centres are a relatively new development. Where both these facilities exist in the same area there is sometimes found a degree of overlap, and confusion on the part of both the referred and the referring as to the differences between the two. The DHSS seminar held at the National Institute for Social Work was set up to provide an exchange of ideas

about day care for the mentally ill.

The opening paper by Douglas Bennett gives a comprehensive review of the role of the day hospital, showing how this has changed in parallel with changing attitudes and practice in psychiatric care. It emphasises that to some extent the role of individual day hospitals may be influenced by other provision, or the lack of it, in the area.

The second paper (Geoff Shepherd) draws attention to the contribution of recent research in the socio-psychological field towards the creation of a 'non-institutionalizing environment', taking up a point in the first paper that the long-term patient will always be with us.

Carol Edwards, who has been one of those involved in a major study of all day care for adults, draws upon the study to give details about day care available for the mentally ill. Mrs Edwards highlights the similarities that have been found